

King's Children.

HOW TO HOLD THE YOUNG PEOPLE.

FANNIE LEWIS.

This is a subject often discussed by pastors and Christian workers. We hear a great deal of theorizing and learned discussions on the subject at conventions and conferences, and indeed it is an important subject, for the church of to-morrow rests with the young people of to-day. The older ones are ever ready with their pet theories and hobbies, but rarely do we hear from the young people themselves on this important question.

But as it is only a few years since I passed through all the trying experiences of a young convert, I can perhaps say a few things from experience, and present the matter from a new standpoint—that of the young people themselves. I can sympathize with the trials and perplexities of the young discipline, so I will endeavor to present this new side of the question, hoping that I may be able to advance some idea that will help some pastor in his work among the young, and thus lessen the trials of some young Christian who is struggling with the problems of the first few months of discipleship.

In the first place, make the young people feel that they have a place in the church, that the church needs them as well as they need the church. They are not simply in the church for ornament—although bright, manly young men, and earnest, happy-hearted, young ladies are an ornament to any church—but that they must be of use, that the test of discipleship is fruitfulness. Set them to work and make them feel the importance of their work. And indeed the young can do a work that no one else can do. Set the young at work to save the young. Do not wait six months or a year for them to feel at home in the church, before giving them something to do, for then you will find it harder to get them at it, but set them to work at once. Give them something definite to do, generalities may do for the older ones, but you must give your young people definite work, or you will hardly get them to work at all. They are ignorant of what is expected of them, hence some special duty must be assigned.

The first six months of a young Christian's life is often worse than wasted, it is often a going back rather than a pressing forward, simply because they do not know what they can do. They look around for work, but there seems to be nothing but the long prayers, exhortations, and experiences of the old "fathers and mothers in Israel," and these they feel are beyond

them, they have not passed through such deep experiences, so they remain unoccupied. Satan finds mischief for idle minds as well as idle hands to do, so the young disciple becomes discouraged, and Satan whispers "you are not good enough to be a Christian." Because the daily life has not come up to the high standard set for itself, the young Christian is almost ready to say, "I cannot be a Christian, it is no use trying." As I once heard a good Methodist brother say "they had just religion enough to make them miserable, and lacked the knowledge how to get enough to make them happy."

Fortunate indeed is the young convert who can be connected with some live Young People's Society, and learn by associating with other young Christians, the Christian's secret of a happy life, learn to do the little things that are not much in themselves, but do so much to strengthen and develop the young so that they may be able and ready for the larger duties as they present themselves. Let them learn speedily that the happy Christian is the busy Christian. A few years of this work will develop the latent possibilities and powers until the young disciple so trained, will be ready for every branch of Christian work except preaching a sermon, and very many will from this work be called to the larger work of preaching the Gospel.

I consider no church fully organized without a Young People's Society of some kind. If the Sunday-school is the nursery of the church, the Young People's Society is the field where the tender sapling is cultivated and developed into strong trees. The seed bed and nursery are necessary, but after the tender plants are transplanted from the nursery into the Master's great field, it is none the less necessary that they be cultivated and cared for, else the drought of discouragement, the storms of temptation, and the weeds of sin and folly will destroy them before they have time to grow and develop into strong oaks.

The Young People's Society should be spiritual in its aims. Too many of our Societies are along musical and literary lines, to the exclusion of the spiritual. A Musical or Literary Society is all right in its place, but it does not develop Christian character, fails to strengthen and render more faithful the young, tender branch, it has missed its opportunity—it exists in vain. Make the spiritual feature the one great object, and all other things accessory, let them add to the interest, but do not sacrifice spirituality to novelty.

Teach your young people loyalty to the church, make them feel that their church is right, that the church needs their best

endeavors. But in your zeal for loyalty to church do not err on the side of narrowness. Do not make them feel that they are fenced in with a high wall, and that all outside is filled with ravening wolves. Teach them love for all who love Christ. Let their motto be for "Christ and the Church." Let them understand that other folds contain lambs as tenderly cared for as they, lambs as dear to the good Shepherd.

The young convert has a hard time getting settled in the Christian life. They so often lose sight of the fact that Christian character is a plant of slow growth, not a mushroom to spring up to perfection in a single night. Too often they think that because they are Christians they will not fall into sin, and step aside from the straight path, but must be firmly established like the dear fathers and mothers in Israel they see around them. So when they are tempted and fall—and temptations must come—they become disheartened and are ready to give up. They cannot wait for the plant to develop, but expect the full fruit, when the seed is but sown. The young Christian starts out with high ideals, which is right—for it is better to have high ideals, even though they never be attained, than to have a lower standard and reach it, for we can never rise above our ideals. But we are to strive to attain and not be discouraged because we cannot reach our highest aim at a single bound for:

"Heaven is not reached at a single bound,
We build the ladder by which we rise,
From the lowly earth to the vaulted skies,
And mount to its summit round by round."

Teach them that if they would be true Christians, they must grow and be fruitful. That the Christian life consists in a constant growth upward, nourished by daily prayer and Bible study. The Christian Endeavor pledge has been the means in God's hand of strengthening thousands of young disciples into strong, sturdy Christians ready to "do all things through Christ who strengtheneth me." Many have taken this pledge and can testify to the beneficial results of this reminder of duty. It assigns no new duties, asks nothing but what any Christian should be willing to do, but simply brings to our remembrance the things we should do. "When thou vowest a vow unto the Lord, defer not to pay it."

Beaver City, Nebr.

How often do we look upon God as our last and feeblest resource! We go to Him because we have nowhere else to go. And then we learn that the storms of life have driven us, not upon the rocks, but unto the desired haven.—Ex.